AKha A04
Miao AE5

/108 cont./

A 595 [422] [606] [179] even the clothes of the secondary wives, belong to her. Among the Akha, the position of the daughter-in-law, who is the first to be called upon for assistance in all the difficult or unpleasant work of the women, is similar to her position among the Meau, and presumably has likewise been influenced by the Chinese. Among the Akha, as among the Meau, after the wedding both sexes are required to observe marital fidelity, which among the Meau at least is not always followed. If a man commits adultery with a girl, it is considered unimportant, provided that there are no consequences. If there are, the man must marry the girl or pay an indemnity agreed upon. It is different if a man commits adultery with a married woman and the affair is discovered. In this case, the seducer has to pay the deceived husband the entire bride price or he will be punished by the village chief. Moreover, the disclosure of such a case is a terrible disgrace for the seducer, whose prestige in the community suffers greatly (see the section, "Dissolution of Marriage," in this chapter).

A M 837 684 [558]

The obligation for marital fidelity for both sexes is stricter among the Akha than among the Meau.

Telford (1) reports that among the Akha of Kengtung a married, but childless woman may have sexual intercourse now and then with an unmarried man. If she becomes pregnant, her husband has to /109/ slaughter a pig and give it to her lover. I assume that the reference to a slaughtered pig means that a sacrificial feast must be arranged.

A 184 837

1. Page 108.

A M 837 432 583 M 174 583 432

Wife exchange, the lending of wives, and outright wife-purchase, under which I do not include the indirect purchase for marriage described above, are equally unknown among the Meau and Akha. It can be assumed, I think, that in former times among the Meau a purchase of wives in some form as yet unknown might have been practiced. In any case this is indicated by the fact that the Meau believe it is not proper to sell the household broom, because this would be tantamount

/112 cont./

586 769 extremely rare and usually the parents straighten out the matter. If there is a divorce nevertheless, the ancestors are not informed and no sacrifice is offered, lest the ancestors' attention be drawn to the unpleasant fact.

586 837 Among the Meau a husband has no divorce-right. This is only logical since it is possible for him to marry another girl at any time. The wife, on the other hand, can get a divorce, though this is somewhat difficult. To begin with, the only grounds for divorce for her is her own marital infidelity and her flight with the seducer. First of all, therefore, she has [558] to find a man who is willing to shoulder the unpleasant aspects of adultery and the ensuing loss of his prestige.

[684] If the adulteress refuses to return to her husband, the adulterer and seducer, or his family, must repay the bride price to the deceived husband. If he is not able to do this at once, he must pay it in installments, /113/ and this may sometimes take a long time. All of the woman's children [851] who were born before the complete recovery of the bride price belong to the former husband. The future children belong to the new husband only after the final payment of the bride price.

Moreover, the adulterer sought must be able to take upon [614] himself the enmity of the family of the husband, which is no [578] easy matter if this is a powerful sib. It is precisely in such [595] sibs, however, that unhappy wives are the most common. The husband is often old, has several wives, and is able to buy his new wife by reason of his money. She, in turn, had looked forward to a different life and instead is treated badly by the wives superior to her, but especially by her mother-in-law, whereas the husband pays no attention to her.

Since the regulations mean a heavy burden for the new husband, it is not easy for a wife eager for a divorce to obtain her freedom.

586 648 587 [583] If the wife of a Meau sees absolutely no way out and yet wishes to leave her husband, she turns to a Chinese trader (see the chapter, "Trade"). They travel around a great deal and know all the Meau villages and the conditions prevailing among